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CIA/RR-CB-60-47

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31 August 1960

## CURRENT SUPPORT BRIEF

SOVIET BLOC MERCHANT SHIPPING SERVICE TO WEST AFRICA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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**CONFIDENTIAL**SOVIET BLOC MERCHANT SHIPPING SERVICE TO WEST AFRICA

Regular service by bloc merchant ships to West African ports began in late 1958 and has steadily increased through mid-1960. Almost 80 percent of the service in 1960 has been provided by Polish ships, but calls by Soviet ships appear to be increasing. In addition, East Germany has announced its intention to increase African service, and the CEMA Maritime Transport Subcommittee has discussed liner service to West Africa. By 1963 the service provided by bloc ships to West Africa may be double that of 1960.

In the five-month period from 15 February to 20 July 1960,\* bloc ships made 84 calls at West African ports, 65 of which were calls by Polish ships and 19 calls by Soviet ships. Service in 1960 increased 58 percent over that during the same period in 1959 when 53 calls were made, 50 by Polish ships and 3 by Soviet ships. During the sample period, both for 1959 and 1960, Polish liner service accounted for three quarters of the calls made by all Polish vessels.

Calls at West African Ports by Bloc Merchant Ships  
(15 February - 20 July 1959 and 1960) 1/

Port	Calls by Polish Ships				Calls by Soviet Ships			
	1959		1960		1959		1960	
	Total	Liner	Total	Liner	Total	Tanker	Total	Tanker
Casablanca	15	2	17	2	3	0	9	3
Las Palmas	6	6	7	6	0	0	1	0
Teneriffe	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Dakar	2	2	7	6	0	0	0	0
Conakry	8	8	4	4	0	0	5	2
Freetown	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0
Monrovia	2	2	4	4	0	0	0	0
Cape Coast	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Accra	5	5	6	6	0	0	2	0
Takoradi	6	6	8	8	0	0	2	0
Lagos	1	1	3	3	0	0	0	0
Libreville	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Sao Thome	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total	50	37	65	48	3	0	19	5

Liner Service is being provided by the West Africa Line of the Polish Steamship Company. This line maintains scheduled liner service in the true sense, with four ships\*\* following published schedules, making regular and frequent voyages to multiple ports of call.\*\*\* The service differs from that provided so far by the Soviet ships most of which have called at only one port and have followed no published schedule.

\*This period was selected for sample purposes because the USSR announced scheduled service to Guinea would start on 15 February 1960.

\*\*Including one ship (Wilhelm Doerenkamp) under time charter from West Germany.

\*\*\*There have been recurrent rumors that the Polish liners are carrying military weapons to West Africa but there has been no confirmation of these rumors to date. Early in 1959, however, a Polish vessel did deliver a cargo of Czech arms to Guinea.

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The first voyage on the Polish West African Line was made in December 1958, but the line was not included in the published schedule until January 1959. Service was first advertised to Accra, Takoradi and Lagos, with one ship sailing monthly; service was extended to the full range by August 1959 with two sailings from Polish ports monthly. All voyages in 1960 have included calls at Las Palmas, Dakar, Accra and Takoradi with occasional calls at Conakry, Freetown, Monrovia, Lagos, Cape Coast, Libreville, Teneriffe, and Sao Thome. The calls at Cape Coast, Teneriffe, Libreville, and Sao Thome, were not scheduled in advance and undoubtedly were on the basis of "as cargo offers."

In June 1960 the Polish Steamship Company announced the opening of a new line to Antwerp for transshipment service to the Belgian Congo. This is not a part of the service of the West Africa Line and is regarded as providing an opportunity for Polish trade agencies to explore in Antwerp the export possibilities to West Africa. 2/ Polish trade agencies now presumably also will explore trade possibilities directly in the Congo, and the West Africa Line may be extended to Boma or Matadi in the Congo in the coming year.

All but two of the 17 calls by Polish tramps in 1960 were at Casablanca averaging over three calls at that port each month. This tramp service to Casablanca has been in operation for several years, mainly to service the heavy movements of phosphates to Poland, and probably will continue.

Calls by Polish ships in the whole of 1959 were fairly evenly spaced throughout the year and amounted to a total of 107 calls. The 6 calls by Soviet merchant ships were in April, May and December. Four of these calls were at Morocco and the other two were not related to trade. 3/

The service by Soviet ships to West African ports is minor in comparison to Polish service and much of it is tramp in nature. Even the Arkhangel'sk, announced as opening scheduled service to Guinea in February 1960, exhibited liner qualities only outbound, carrying automobiles and machinery, and continued in ballast to Cuba to pick up a load of sugar--a typically tramp operation. 4/ Only six Soviet dry cargo ships in 1960 made the round trip from the Black Sea to West Africa and back to the Black Sea, of which five called only at Casablanca and one called only at Conakry. Only one of the three calls at Casablanca in 1959 was a round trip.

Nevertheless, calls by Soviet dry cargo ships have afforded the USSR the opportunity to publicize scheduled service to West Africa. In February 1960 the USSR announced the opening of scheduled service to Guinea with the sailing of the Arkhangel'sk, and in April 1960 the intention of opening services to Ghana and other African countries. 5/ The pattern of calls by dry cargo ships in the 1960 period under review--two in February, three in March, two in April, one in May, three in June and three in July--may provide an indication that Soviet service is increasing. It is unlikely, however, that Soviet ships will approach within the next year the magnitude of service provided at present by Polish ships.\*

\*Soviet trawlers, noteworthily, made 15 calls at West African ports in 1960, almost all to Takoradi and Accra, providing the opportunity to show the Soviet flag in these ports.

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Although East Germany has announced intentions to serve Africa, there are strong indications that East German ships will not be available to begin service before early 1962. 6/ Political motivations, however, may override East Germany's need to use its ships elsewhere, prompting earlier East German service to West Africa. 7/ Liner service to West Africa also has been discussed in the CEMA Maritime Transport Subcommittee. At present, the Polish service is carrying cargo for Czechoslovakia, Hungary and presumably East Germany.

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Analyst: [REDACTED] 25X1A

Sources:

1. Navy. ONI unpublished material. C.  
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2. [REDACTED]
3. Navy. ONI unpublished material. C.  
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5. [REDACTED]
6. State, Berlin, Joint Publication Research Service, "The GDR Merchant Fleet Goes Everywhere," Der Aussenhandel und Der Innerdeutsche Handel, 20 Apr 60, p. 99-107. U.  
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6. JPRS: 2965, 1 July 1960, p. 99. U. [Eval. RR 3.]

Radio Free Europe. Item No 3730/59, 4 Sep 59. U. [Eval. RR 3.]

7. JPRS: 2965, 1 July 60, p. 99. U. [Eval. RR 3.]

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4. 5. Moscow News, 17 Feb 60, p. 5. U. [Eval. RR 2.]

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1. 7. Navy. ONI unpublished material. C. [Eval. RR 2.]

Lloyds Shipping Index, daily. U. [Eval. RR 2.]

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TO: Chief, Dissemination Branch, Support Staff, OCI  
FROM: Chief, Current Support Staff, ORR

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(Title) (Date)

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Brief

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# ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

SERVICE BY MERCHANT SHIPS OF THE SOVIET BLOC  
CSB DRAFT: TO WEST AFRICA 1959-1960

FROM:

NO.

DATE

9 August 1960

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

		DATE		
		RECEIVED	FORWARDED	
1.	Monitor V. Marchetti	10 Aug.	19 Aug.	VM
2.	Typist [REDACTED]	24 Aug	24 Aug	[REDACTED]
3.	Proofers [REDACTED]	24 Aug	24 Aug	[REDACTED]
4.	Monitor V. Marchetti	22 Aug	22 Aug	VM
5.	Author [REDACTED] S/TR	22 Aug	22 Aug	BG (vm)
6.	Ch/St/CS	30 Aug		HE
7.	Ch/ERA	30 Aug	30 Aug	Fla
8.	Ch/St/CS	31 Aug	31 Aug	HE
9.	OCI Printers	31 Aug	7	SW
10.				
11.				
12.				
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1-6: Author through survey of bloc ship going in the area. Makes an interesting CSB!

CB 60-47  
~~CSM No.~~

Date 31 Aug 60

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